

THE SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN
2007 - 2011

This plan is available upon request in alternative formats such as large print, electronic format (disk or emailed), audio or Braille.

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The Small Business Development Corporation acknowledges the input received from Corporation staff and some individuals within the community, which has been invaluable in the preparation of this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Background

The Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) facilitates the development and growth of small businesses in Western Australia by providing information, guidance, referral and business facilitation services and delivering programs to address specific needs within the small business sector. The SBDC promotes the small business sector through research, advocacy, liaison and communication activities and supports the Small Business Centre network throughout Western Australia.

The mission of the Corporation is to create opportunity and wealth for small business in Western Australia.

The Corporation's premises are located in the Perth CBD and services are delivered face to face, online and via the telephone. The SBDC's core functions include:

Small Business Services

Provide free, confidential business guidance either over the telephone, via the Internet, by personal appointment at the SBDC, and through on-site visits to clients' premises. This combination of guidance and information services, together with a range of specialist networks and programs, covers all facets of business start up and growth and is accessible to all members of the community.

Business Information and Licence Centre (BILC)

Located on the ground floor the BILC is a one-stop service incorporating a specialist business publications bookshop, a dedicated small business advisor from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and easy online access to details of over 6,000 State and Commonwealth licences and permits required to operate a business in Western Australia.

Workshops

The SBDC offers a unique workshop program, providing clients with practical information on key aspects of successfully establishing and operating a small business. A number of workshops are also available online and in CD-ROM formats.

State Migration Centre

Promote and support business and skills migration to Western Australia.

Business Facilitation Services

Coordinate several of the SBDC's activities including the Small Business Centre Network, Project and Program Resources, and the Service Delivery Agreement for the Indian Ocean Territories. Ensuring that small businesses throughout the State have access to information and support no matter where they are located in Western Australia.

Corporate Communications and Events

The SBDC hosts and participates in a diverse range of events aimed at profiling its current services or creating awareness of new initiatives and programs. The SBDC also stages the annual Western Australian Regional Small Business Awards.

Policy, Planning and External Relations

Consult with small businesses, monitoring and reviewing issues and trends impacting the sector and advocating on behalf of small businesses at all levels of government.

Planning for Better Access

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Aging and Carers (2003), 20.6% of Australians, or more than one in five people, identify themselves as having some form of disability. It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* that public authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) that outlines the ways in which the authority will ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to its facilities and services. Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the *WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984* and the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA).

Progress Since 1996

The Small Business Development Corporation is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities through the improvement of access to its information, services and facilities. The Corporation adopted its first Disability Services Plan (DSP) in 1996 to ensure that people with disabilities can access Corporation services and facilities. The DSP addressed both the statutory requirements under the *WA Disability Services Act 1993* and the obligations under the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The DSP has undergone two internal reviews since 1996.

Since the adoption of the initial DSP, the Corporation has implemented a number of initiatives and made progress towards better access. These include:

- access to small business information workshops as online learning tools which are also available in CD-ROM format;
- in addition, the SBDC was awarded the Association for the Blind of WA *2006 Education Training and Recreation Access Award*;
- the SBDC website includes a forum for users to provide feedback on services and facilities and to have grievances and complaints managed in accordance with the SBDC's Complaints Management Policy;
- SBDC is an affiliate of the Companion Card Program which promotes the existing right of people with a disability to fair ticketing.

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement for People with Disabilities, their Families and Carers

The Small Business Development Corporation is committed to:

- ensuring that people with disabilities, their families and carers are able to fully access the range of services and facilities it provides;
- ensuring that people with disabilities are given the opportunity to participate in shaping the development of the Corporation's services through the consultative process;
- consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers and where required, disability organisations to ensure barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately;
- ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes in the DAIP; and
- achieving the six desired outcomes of its DAIP.

The six desired outcomes are:

Outcome 1: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Small Business Development Corporation.

Outcome 2: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Small Business Development Corporation.

Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from the Small Business Development Corporation in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from staff of the Small Business Development Corporation.

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Small Business Development Corporation.

Outcome 6: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Small Business Development Corporation.

Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Responsibility for the Planning Process

A DAIP Committee of the Small Business Development Corporation was established in March 2007 comprising of the Director Corporate Resources, representatives that have key responsibility for the provision of service to the community and one person that has knowledge of disability issues to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the plan.

Community Consultation Process

In 2007, the Corporation undertook to review its DSP, consult with key stakeholders and draft a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- examination of the initial DSP and subsequent review reports to see what has been achieved and what still needs work;
- examination of other relevant Corporation documents and strategies;
- investigation of contemporary trends and good practice in access and inclusion;
- consultation with key staff; and
- consultation with the community.

The *Disability Services Act Regulations* set out the minimum consultation requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. State Government authorities must call for submissions (either general or specific) by notice in a state wide newspaper or on any website maintained on behalf of the State Government Authority. Other mechanisms may also be used.

As part of the community consultation process in developing the SBDC's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2007 – 2011, draft strategies to meet the six Standards of access and inclusion were placed on the SBDC website and on the Department of Premier and Cabinet's ConsultWA website which invited any person with a disability, or their families, carers, representative groups or organisations to provide their views on how the Corporation can provide improved access and inclusion. This invitation was also provided to all staff.

Findings of the Consultation

The review and consultation found that most of the objectives in the first DSP had been achieved and that a new plan was required, to ensure currency and relevance. The new plan should not only address current access but also reflect contemporary values and practices, such as striving for inclusion and

meeting more than the minimum compliance with access standards. The plan must also keep abreast of legislative and regulatory changes.

The consultation also identified some remaining barriers to access and inclusion, to be addressed in the DAIP Implementation Plan.

Access Barriers

While the review and consultation noted achievements in improving access, it also identified a range of barriers that require redress. These access barriers include:

- staff may not be sufficiently informed to provide the same level of service to people with disabilities;
- agents and contractors of the Corporation may not be sufficiently informed to provide the same level of service to people with disabilities.
- physical infrastructure may not always meet the needs of people with disabilities; and
- publications do not make notation that they are available in other formats on request.

The identification of these barriers informed the development of strategies in the DAIP.

Responsibility for Implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act* that public authorities must take all practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents and contractors.

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of the Corporation. Some actions in the Implementation Plan will apply to all areas of the Corporation while others will apply only to a specific area. The Implementation Plan sets out who is responsible for each action. The DAIP Committee will guide the overall implementation of the plan in consultation with the Corporate Executive.

Communicating the Plan to Staff and People with Disabilities

In July 2007, the Corporation sent copies of the draft DAIP to all those who contributed to the planning process for feedback. The plan was then formally endorsed by the Corporation's Corporate Executive.

The Corporation has advised, through its website www.sbdc.com.au and through the local media (newspaper) that copies of the plan are available to the community upon request and in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format on cassette or CD, by email and on the Corporation's website.

As plans are amended, both staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updated plans, using the same methods.

Review and Evaluation Mechanisms

The *Disability Services Act* sets out a minimum review requirement for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The Corporation's DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with the Act.

The DAIP Implementation Plan may be amended on a more regular basis to reflect the progress and any access or inclusion issue that may arise. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

Monitoring and Reviewing

- The DAIP Committee will meet every six months in the first year, and as required thereafter, to review progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the DAIP.
- The review of the Corporation's DAIP will be included in the DAIP 2012-2016 which will be submitted to the Disability Services Commission in 2012. The report will outline what had been achieved under the Corporation's DAIP 2007-2011.
- The DAIP Committee will prepare a report each year on the implementation of the DAIP. A status report will be provided to the Corporation's Corporate Executive for formal endorsement.

Evaluation

- The DAIP Committee shall meet once a year, prior to July 31 to consider the impact of any organisational and service changes to identify potential new barriers and any that may have been missed following the initial consultation and development of the 2007-2011 DAIP.
- Where the DAIP Committee has identified new barriers that need to be addressed consultation shall occur with all relevant parties and action shall be taken to develop and implement strategies and tasks to improve service delivery in those areas.
- Where any significant barriers have been identified the DAIP Committee may as part of the consulting process consider calling for input through the Corporation's website and/or directly from key disability service providers.
- New or amended strategies will be included in the DAIP and submitted to Corporate Executive for approval.
- New or amended strategies will be forwarded to the Disability Services Commission as required.
- Copies of the amended DAIP, once endorsed by the Corporation, will be available on www.sbdc.com.au and on request made available to the community in alternative formats.

Reporting on the DAIP

The *Disability Services Act* sets out a minimum reporting requirement for public authorities in relation to DAIPs.

The Corporation will report on the implementation of its DAIP through its Annual Report and the prescribed progress report template to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year, outlining:

- progress towards the desired outcome of its DAIP;
- progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the six desired outcomes; and
- strategies used to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP.

Strategies to Improve Access and Inclusion

As a result of the consultation process the following overarching strategies will guide tasks, reflected in the Implementation Plan, that the Corporation will undertake from 2007 – 2011 to improve access to its services, buildings and information. The six desired outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

Outcome 1: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Small Business Development Corporation.

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that events are organised so that they are accessible to people with disabilities.	July 2007 and ongoing
Ensure that all agents and contractors of the Corporation are aware of their requirements under the DAIP.	August 2007 and ongoing
Promotion of services and events shall make reference to the Companion Card.	January 2008 and ongoing
Ensure that Codes of Conduct and Customer Service Charter are consistent with the DAIP.	April 2008
Ensure that people with disabilities are provided with an opportunity to comment on access to services.	June 2008 and ongoing

Outcome 2: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Small Business Development Corporation.

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that the building and other facilities are physically accessible to people with disabilities.	July 2007 and ongoing
Ensure that all building improvements are in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards covering access to premises.	July 2007 and ongoing

Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from the Small Business Development Corporation in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that publications are readily available at key access points.	July 2007 and ongoing
Provide access to information and services through our public websites in line with the Guidelines for State Government Websites and the Web Content Accessibility Guideline developed by World Wide Consortium (W3C).	July 2007 and ongoing
Ensure that publications provide information in simple, clearly written English and are in a print size that is easy to read. Upon request alternative formats will be provided such as large print, electronic format, audio or Braille.	July 2007 and ongoing
Publications will have a notation "alternative formats such as large print, electronic format, audio or Braille is available on request".	January 2008 and ongoing

Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from staff of the Small Business Development Corporation.

Strategy	Timeline
Implement and monitor the DAIP to ensure its success.	July 2007 and ongoing
Raise awareness in the use of "Better Hearing" cards.	December 2007
Improve the awareness of staff about disability and access.	July 2008 and ongoing

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Small Business Development Corporation.

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that the grievance mechanism process and outcome satisfaction survey forms are available in formats to meet the needs of people with disabilities.	December 2007 and ongoing
Ensure that current grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities.	April 2008

Outcome 6: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Small Business Development Corporation.

Strategy	Timeline
Improve community awareness about consultative processes in place.	July 2007 and ongoing

Implementation Plan 2007 - 2008

The Implementation Plan itemises what the Corporation will be undertaking in 2007 – 2008 to improve access to its services, information and facilities for people with disabilities.

The Implementation Plan is presented using a table to outline:

- the broad strategy that the individual tasks are supporting;
- individual tasks being undertaken;
- a timeline for completion of individual tasks; and
- the officer position or part of the Corporation with responsibility for completing the individual tasks.

As outlined in the Corporation's DAIP, many of the broad strategies will not be completed in 2007-2008, however individual tasks to support the achievement of those strategies may well be undertaken in part or whole in 2007-2008 through the implementation of the Plan.

Broad strategies that will not be achieved in 2007-2008 will be supported by tasks outlined in future Implementation Plans.

Outcome 1: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Small Business Development Corporation.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that events are organised so that they are accessible to people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all events are planned using the Disability Service Commission's Accessible Events checklist. 	July 2007 and ongoing	Corporate Communications and Events
Ensure that all agents and contractors of the Corporation are aware of their requirements under the DAIP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Corporation's DAIP and the requirements under the Disability Services Act regarding agents and contractors. 	August 2007 and ongoing	Director Corporate Resources/ Director Small Business Services
Promotion of services and events shall make reference to the Companion Card.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop promotional material that highlights accessibility for people with disabilities. • Promote the Companion Card. 	January 2008 and ongoing	Corporate Communications and Events/ Business Information Licence Centre
Ensure that Codes of Conduct and Customer Service Charter are consistent with the DAIP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Codes of Conduct and Customer Service Charter to ensure consistency with the DAIP. 	April 2008	Corporate Resources
Ensure that people with disabilities are provided with an opportunity to comment on access to services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation to include a mechanism to assist people with disabilities to comment on services in future reviews of services. 	June 2008 and ongoing	Director Corporate Resources

Outcome 2: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Small Business Development Corporation.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that the building and other facilities are physically accessible to people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and identify access barriers to buildings and facilities. • Identify access complaints to support audit reports. 	July 2007 and ongoing	Director Corporate Resources
Ensure that all building improvements are in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards covering access to premises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain an awareness of Australian Standards covering access to premises, including the Disability Discrimination Act's Premises Standard. 	July 2007 and ongoing	Director Corporate Resources

Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from the Small Business Development Corporation in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that publications are readily available at key access points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all events are planned using the Disability Service Commission's Accessible Events checklist. 	July 2007 and ongoing	Corporate Communications and Events/ Business Information Licence Centre
Provide access to information and services through our public websites in line with the Guidelines for State Government Websites and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines developed by World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain website according to the W3C Web Content Accessibility guidelines as outlined in the State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities. 	July 2007 and ongoing	Coordinator Online Resources

Ensure that publications provide information in simple, clearly written English and are in a print size that is easy to read. Upon request alternative formats will be provided such as large print, electronic format, audio or Braille.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff are aware of how to obtain information in other formats. 	July 2007 and ongoing	Corporate Communications and Events
Publications will have a notation “alternative formats such as large print, electronic format, audio or Braille is available on request”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all documents carry a notation regarding availability in alternative formats. 	January 2008 and ongoing	Corporate Communications and Events

Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from staff of the Small Business Development Corporation.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Implement and monitor the DAIP to ensure its success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform staff about their role in implementing and monitoring the plan to ensure its success. 	July 2007 and ongoing	Director Corporate Resources
Raise awareness in the use of “Better Hearing” cards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training in the use of “Better Hearing” cards to staff who work at all main reception points including the Business Information Licence Centre. 	December 2007	Coordinator Human Resources
Improve the awareness of staff about disability and access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide staff with training on disability awareness issues. • Raise awareness for new staff through induction. 	July 2008 and ongoing	Coordinator Human Resources

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Small Business Development Corporation.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that the grievance mechanism process and outcome satisfaction survey forms are available in formats to meet the needs of people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide grievance mechanism process and outcome satisfaction survey forms in alternative formats on request. 	December 2007 and ongoing	Corporate Resources
Ensure that current grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Complaints Management Policy and Procedure to ensure consistency with DAIP. 	April 2008	Coordinator Human Resources

Outcome 6: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Small Business Development Corporation.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Improve community awareness about consultative processes in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation for any public consultation will be advertised through different forums across the community. 	July 2007 and ongoing	Director Corporate Resources/ Coordinator Online Resources/Corporate Communication and Events